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## **JOHN ASHER, ICONIC MEMBER OF CHURCHILL DOWNS FAMILY AND LOUISVILLE COMMUNITY, HAS PASSED AWAY AT AGE 62**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Monday, Aug. 27, 2018)** – John Asher, an iconic and beloved member of the Churchill Downs family and Louisville community, passed away Monday morning after suffering a heart attack while on vacation with his family in Florida. He was 62.

An irreplaceable ambassador for Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby, Asher joined Churchill Downs, home of the world-famous Kentucky Derby, in January 1997, and he served as vice president of Racing Communications since March 1999.

“To say that racing has lost one of its giants with the passing of John Asher does not begin to capture the impact this man has had and will continue to have on the Churchill Downs family,” said Kevin Flanery, President of Churchill Downs Racetrack. “His passion for the Kentucky Derby, horseracing, his WKU Hilltoppers, great music, and above all else his loving family was genuine and infectious. Racing has lost an icon. I, and many others, have lost a kind and generous friend. We will miss John’s laugh, his unmistakable voice, and his unique storytelling. Our hearts and prayers are with his wife Dee, his daughters Heather, Erin and Emma and his grandsons, Cameron and Caden.”

Born Nov. 22, 1955 in Leitchfield, Ky., Asher was a proud alum of Western Kentucky University, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in Journalism.

Prior to joining Churchill Downs, Asher was an award-winning radio journalist at WHAS-AM and WAVE-AM in Louisville, where he earned five Eclipse Awards for “Outstanding National Radio Coverage of Thoroughbred Racing” and countless other honors, including a National Headliner and Scripps-Howard Award and honors from the Society of Professional Journalists, Radio and Television News Directors Association and Kentucky Broadcasters Association. Asher also was honored seven times by the Associated Press as Kentucky large market radio’s “Best Reporter.”

Horse industry honors bestowed upon Asher include the Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners’ Warner L. Jones Jr. Horseman of the Year award in 2006; the Charles W. Engelhard Award for excellence in media coverage from the Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders; the Dean Eagle Award from the Knights of Columbus; and a media award from the Kentucky Horsemen’s Benevolent and Protective Association.

Asher was selected in March 2010 from a pool of more than 5,500 nominees from the region as one of 128 individuals recognized as Leadership Louisville’s Connectors. These “Connectors” are described as successful in getting things done because of their distinctive style of “trusted leadership.”

Asher was recognized in 2004 as “Public Relations Practitioner of the Year” by the Western Kentucky University School of Journalism and Broadcasting. A former president of the WKU National Alumni Board of Directors, Asher also was honored with a “Summit Award” for his volunteer efforts for the university.

Asher was well-known for his generous community service outreach and volunteerism. He was a former member of the board of directors of the Kentuckiana Chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International, and was honored as the chapter’s “Volunteer of the Year” in 2004.

Plans for a memorial service that could occur as early as next week will be finalized in the coming days, according to his wife Dee Asher.

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